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SUBJECT: BURKINA FASO: ACHIEVEMENTS IN COMBATING CHILD
TRAFFICKING

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 551

¶1. SUMMARY: During the last six months the Government of Burkina Faso has made significant efforts to combat child trafficking. The measures include massive information campaigns, arrests and a new anti-trafficking law. END SUMMARY.

Significant achievements

¶2. Mrs. Somkinda Traore, Secretary General of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs was the keynote speaker at a July 30th Child Trafficking Conference organized by the International Labor Organization (IPEC/Lutrena programs). She outlined the efforts and successes the Government of Burkina Faso has undertaken since January 2009.

¶3. According to Traore, in the last six months the GOBF has undertaken the following anti-TIP measures:

-- Decree Number 2009-365/PRES/PM/MTSS/MS/MASN of 28 May 2009 establishes a list of the worst and most dangerous forms of child labor in Burkina Faso.

-- With the assistance of the Lutrena program (ILO), Burkina Faso was able to mobilize and use NGOs and associations, the trade union of road transporters, and media outlets as well as government workers operating outside of Ouagadougou to promote anti-child trafficking messages. As a result, fourteen action programs were established to permit prevention, protection and socio-economic reinsertion of victims of trafficking and assistance to families where children may be considered vulnerable to trafficking.

-- In addition, the GOB recorded the following results in combating TIP

= 3,000 victims of child trafficking were rescued and returned to their families.
= 1,080 victims or highly vulnerable children were schooled (either formally or as apprentices).
= 50 traffickers were arrested and 5 prosecuted.
= 76 suspected traffickers saw their networks dismantled.
= 32 provincial committees were set up to help sensitization efforts.
= 68 relay centers were established in 68 different villages.
= 8 school sensitization clubs were created.
= 600,000 people were impacted by information and sensitization campaigns.

TV spot on child trafficking

-- The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Lutrena project also produced a short video on child trafficking and the legal repercussions of engaging in it. The video was broadcasted multiple times on local television channels. The 4.20 minute video shows a farmer negotiating the "purchase"

of five children to plow and maintain his field. The trafficker convinces villagers to give him their children whom he will in turn sell or lease to the farmer. He gives one of the mothers 2,000 CFA (4 USD) in exchange for her son.

While the children are being transported by bus to the farmer's village police intercept the vehicle and conduct identity checks. The police quickly realize that the trafficker is illegally transporting the children, arrest him and send him to court. In court the trafficker is sentenced to 10 years in jail and a monetary fine for child trafficking. The video clip finishes by stating that "Children are not merchandize. Those who engage in trafficking -- traffickers or their accomplices are criminals and will be punished". (Note: The video also thanks the USG and the Government of Denmark for their financing of the video. End Note.)

COMMENT: While the situation of child trafficking and child labor remains a concern for Burkina Faso, the GOBF seems eager to address the issue, even publicly, and has made significant efforts to address child trafficking concerns. The Secretary General was keen to share the successes with us and said she hopes that this would be reflected in our annual TIP report. She also expressed the hope that the USG would continue to fund Lutrena projects so that Burkina Faso could continue to combat child trafficking. END COMMENT.

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